

American people won't find this acceptable either.

So I respectfully invite each of my colleagues, Republican and Democrats alike, and even those of you who have been in Washington for a while, to join us for this moment of bipartisanship and work together on behalf of our fellow citizens. Let's remember that it is a privilege to serve the American people. It's time to get to work.

UPHOLDING SECTION 5 OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. VEASEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. VEASEY. As oral arguments are being prepared for the February 27 U.S. Supreme Court hearing in the case of *Shelby County v. Holder*, which challenges the constitutionality of section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, I stand here today in strong support of upholding section 5 as evidence of its current critical necessity. In my home State of Texas, the need for section 5 of the Voting Rights Act is playing out in a very dramatic fashion.

I'm a plaintiff in the ongoing litigation involving the 2011 Texas redistricting case, *Quesada v. The State of Texas*. I can personally attest and flatly state that overt and deliberate racial discrimination is still used by leaders in Texas today. I wish that statement were untrue or out of date. It would be wonderful to say that we have progressed past the need for protection under section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. Sadly, this is not the case. Section 5 protects minorities from racial discriminatory voter ID laws, voter suppression tactics, and discriminatory redistricting plans. These protections are needed now as much as ever.

In 2011, just 2 years ago, a map was drawn by the Texas Legislature that didn't merely affect the politics of our State. Overt racial discriminatory tactics were used to isolate and suppress hundreds of thousands of minorities for the purpose of political gain by current partisan leaders of my State. Latino and African American citizens in the State of Texas suffered the most aggressive and deliberate discriminatory blows to our constitutional rights to fairly participate in elections.

Cold and heartless tactics were used that should be simply relics of the past—relics like “packing” millions of minority voters together into as few districts as people to dilute the impact of their vote by “cracking” the remaining voters to ensure that their vote has no impact at all. Minorities were packed precinct by precinct and block by block in order to contain the impact of their growing population. And yet here we are today, fighting to uphold section 5.

The right to vote and the right for one's voice to be heard through elected representation is a legally enacted and constitutional right that many have

bled and died for. Yet we are still fighting for this very right. Some say its time to move on. But, my dear friends, we must never move on while these rights are not just at risk but under attack. And when I detail the discrimination contained within the redistricting process, no one should think I'm acting as a partisan Democrat. The three-judge panel in Federal court that heard the evidence, questioned the witnesses, and delivered the opinion of the Texas redistricting case consisted of two judges appointed by Republican Presidents and one judge appointed by a Democratic President. Their finding of intentional discrimination was unanimous. They could not have made their views any clearer, stating:

The parties have provided more evidence of discriminatory intent than we have space or need to address here.

This was not a case heard 30 years ago, or even 10 or 5 years ago. The decision was released just last August, barely 6 months ago.

Lastly, those who tell you that there is no recourse for States that no longer discriminate are, at best, dangerously mistaken. The Voting Rights Act contains provisions for States that have over the years exhibited that they are no longer in need of pre-clearance. States can submit evidence to the Department of Justice or the D.C. District Court that they are no longer using racial discriminatory redistricting tactics and apply for a way out of section 5. As a matter of fact, since 2009, more States than ever before in the history of the Voting Rights Act have been granted the right out.

So why are we challenging the constitutionality of a law that is protecting its citizens from racial discrimination when there is, in fact, recourse? I will tell you the sad truth is because, unfortunately, in States like Texas, where the minority population is growing very rapidly and their voting strength is increasing, rather than work to earn the vote of minority citizens, State leaders would rather suppress voters through racially discriminatory tactics.

My friends, our country is better than this. We are better than this. That's why we are here today in support of upholding section 5 of the Voting Rights Act.

□ 1100

EXPANSION OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, one thing that President Obama mentioned in his State of the Union speech the other night, which I hope he follows up on, is his effort to stop the cost of college tuition and fees from going up at such a rapid rate.

I spoke to a class at the University of Tennessee last week—and I've done

that many times—and whenever I speak to classes, it shocks the students when I tell them that in my first year at the University of Tennessee it cost \$90 per quarter in our tuition. In other words, I went to school for \$270. It went up to \$105, and then \$120, and then \$135 a quarter my senior year, so it went up \$405. But this was shortly after the Federal student loan program had come in.

Until that program came in, college tuition and fees went up at just the rate of inflation. It went up very slowly—in fact, sometimes less than inflation. But now, and ever since that program has come in, tuition and fees have gone up at three or four or five times the rate of inflation, so that today colleges and universities cost 300, 400, and 500 percent higher than they would have if we had just left things alone. Anything the Federal Government subsidizes, the costs just explode.

When I went to the University of Tennessee—my senior year in high school I had been a bag boy at the A&P making \$1.10 an hour—I got a big raise. As a freshman at the university, I became a salesman at Sears and worked there my first 2 years, and I made \$1.25 an hour.

Almost everybody who needed to could work part-time and pay all of their expenses and fees in college. Nobody had to borrow money to go to colleges or universities; nobody got out of school with a debt. Then the Federal Government decided to help. And now, what it has resulted in is almost everybody has to borrow money to pay their tuition and fees, and almost everybody gets out of school with some kind of huge debt.

We've seen the same thing happen in medical care. The Federal Government decided to help out. Before the Federal Government got involved in medical care, medical care was cheap and affordable to almost everybody. Doctors even made house calls. We took what was a very minor problem for a very few people and now we've turned it into a massive, major problem for everyone. That seems to be the history of the Federal Government.

I just came from a hearing in the Oversight and the Government Reform Committee, and I will return to that shortly. But in the GAO report on the New York Medicaid program—which is the largest in the country—it tells about a daily payment method resulting in a \$5,000 daily rate for institutional residents in the State of New York—\$5,000 daily payments. The New York program is paying over twice as much as the average around the country.

We sometimes hear that Medicare and Medicaid can't be cut. We certainly don't want to hurt any lower-income people, but there are some people and companies getting ridiculously, fabulously wealthy off of Medicare and Medicaid. And almost every government program ends up being some sort